

## Report of Director of Environments and Housing

### Report to Executive Board

**Date: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016**

### **Subject: Parks and Countryside Attractions Development Plan**

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of ward(s): Harewood, Roundhay, Temple Newsam		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number:		
Appendix number:		

### Summary of main issues

- From 2013 to 2015 Leeds City Council undertook a major restoration of the Arnold and Marjorie Ziff Tropical World. As a result of these developments there has been a significant improvement in the all-round offer at Tropical World and as a consequence the service can report the following achievements;
  - In the full trading year post development total income increased by 112% from £1,060k pre commencement to £2,245k post completion.
  - Budgeted income from shop sales has increased by 66% from £233k pre completion to a budgeted value of £386k in 2016/17.
  - Budgeted income from Café sales has increased by 86% from £195k pre completion to a budgeted value of £363k in 2016/17.
  - Average Spend per transaction in Tropical World Café has increased by 38% to £8 and the proportion of Tropical World visitors going to the café has doubled.
  - Visitor numbers in 2015/16 up to 410,000, an increase of 45% on numbers pre development;
  - 81.5% of reviews on Trip Advisor are either 'very good' or 'excellent' compared to 79% pre development.
  - Over 75,000 children education visits post development.
- The financial performance demonstrated above, highlights that significant capital investment in the quality of the visitor attraction and experience, is able to act as a catalyst for growth in income and in turn generate savings that make the city's parks and greenspaces more sustainable. By adapting a positive approach to the

management of the attraction, including the implementation of an evidence based approach to marketing, bespoke merchandising and a realignment of entry fees, the service was able to grow revenue exponentially in the period following development. The Parks and Countryside service consider that the potential exists to build upon and replicate this success. Proposals have therefore been considered and options explored at a number of sites as outlined in the below bullet points:

- Tropical World: the principal aim of the next phase of development proposed at Tropical World will be to present a coherent, coordinated and visually stunning series of redevelopments that can be rolled out to the different 'zones' of Tropical World that builds upon the work already undertaken.
- To develop an aerial adventure course, in the form of a concession with Go Ape, with the aim and objective of broadening even further Roundhay Park's appeal to families and residents within Leeds and the City region.
- Lotherton Hall Bird Garden: undertake a renovation of the bird garden that will transform the area into a modern, engaging and exciting visitor attraction that will facilitate the presentation of a much more diverse collection of animals including penguins.
- Home Farm: the aspiration is to refresh and refocus the appeal of Home Farm at Temple Newsam via the development of a bespoke indoor play facility with integral café and retail space.

3. These three attractions and the broader estates are part of the fabric of the city attracting approximately 10 million visits per annum from Leeds residents, as well as generating further visits from the across the city region. At present this broad statistical analysis of the total number of visits, translates into circa 670,000 admissions to the fee paying attractions at Tropical World, Home Farm and Lotherton Hall. The aspiration and vision is to build on the success at Tropical World and increase this number to circa 820,000 by 2020/21. It is considered that this can be achieved by improving the scope, standard and visitor experience at each attraction which will support in broadening the appeal and equally the enjoyment experienced by those visiting each attraction. Capital investment to the value of £3.1m would be required to provide transformational change at each of the three attractions and the potential exists for this investment to act as a catalyst for the delivery of a net saving of £765k per annum by 2020/21 which will help support services.
4. The ambitious plans for these attractions will lead to an improved visitor experience but also increased visitor numbers and therefore improved sustainability at each estate. When considered holistically these improvements will make a positive contribution to the Best Council Plan ambition of becoming a more efficient and enterprising council. In addition, these improvements therefore support the Best Council Plan 2016/17 priorities of 'Enhancing the quality of our public realm and green spaces' with increased visitor numbers 'Supporting economic growth'; an improved learning offer also contributes to the priority around 'Improving educational achievement'.

## **Recommendations**

5. Executive Board are requested to approve the following recommendations:

- 5.1. the principle of incurring expenditure to an estimated value of £3.1m to deliver the improvements to attractions that are outlined in this report and that each phase of development at each site is subject to separate approvals once detailed design and cost estimates are in place.

To request the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside to:

- 5.2. To implement proposals outlined in this report that will continue the themed development of the visitor attraction elements of the Arnold and Marjorie Ziff Tropical World.
- 5.3. To enter into an agreement with Go Ape regarding the establishment of an aerial adventure concession within Roundhay Park and to support the development of a detailed design from which planning consent is to be sought.
- 5.4. To develop plans and gain any necessary consent that may be required to implement the proposals outlined in this report relating to the development of Lotherton Hall Bird garden.
- 5.5. To develop plans and gain any necessary consent that may be required to implement the proposals outlined in this report relating to the development of Home Farm Temple Newsam.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek an endorsement from Executive Board to the principle of improving attractions at Tropical World, Home Farm and Lotherton Hall Bird Garden. The report:

- Highlights conceptual design proposals developed to date;
- Summarises the rationale for development at each site, including an analysis of any pre development consultation outcomes;
- Identifies priority work elements and the phasing of each proposed development;
- Includes an indicative programme of when work is scheduled to take place.

1.2 In addition, the report will highlight the discussions that have taken place regarding the potential to develop an aerial adventure course within Roundhay Park and the opportunity to consider a concession with Go Ape.

## **2 Background information**

2.1 From 2013 to 2015 Leeds City Council undertook a major restoration of Tropical World. The aspiration was to significantly improve the visitor facing elements of the attraction and in parallel undertake a number of key strategic improvements to the fabric of the building that improved both the sustainability and efficiency of the attraction. In total approximately £1.7m was invested into the facility as follows:

- Improvements to the aquarium;
- The development of new customer toilet and baby changing facilities;
- A complete rewire of the building;
- The installation of a new heating system including a biomass boiler;
- An improved, extended and integrated shop and café.

2.2 As a result of these developments there has been a significant improvement in the all-round offer at Tropical World and as a consequence the service can report the following achievements;

- In the full trading year post development total income increased by 112% from £1,060k pre commencement to £2,245k post completion.
- Budgeted income from shop sales has increased by 66% from £233k pre completion to a budgeted value of £386k in 2016/17.
- Budgeted income from Café sales has increased by 86% from £195k pre completion to a budgeted value of £363k in 2016/17.
- Average Spend per transaction in Tropical World Café has increased by 38% to £8 and the proportion of Tropical World visitors going to the café has doubled.
- Visitor numbers in 2015/16 up to 410,000, an increase of 45% on numbers pre development;
- 81.5% of reviews on Trip Advisor are either 'very good' or 'excellent' compared to 79% pre development.
- Over 75,000 children education visits post development.

- 2.3 Overall in the 5 month period following the completion of the initial phase of development, income more than doubled (£704k more) in 2015 compared to 2012 before improvement works was carried out. The financial performance achieved, highlights that significant capital investment in the quality of the visitor attraction and experience is able to act as a catalyst for growth in income and in turn generate savings to improve sustainability. By adapting a positive approach to the management of the attraction, including the implementation of an evidence based approach to marketing, bespoke merchandising and a realignment of entry fees, the service was able to grow revenue exponentially in the period following development. To sustain this growth the service has explored and implemented new opportunities that diversify the existing customer offer on site as demonstrated by the introduction of children's parties and the imminent launch of an online ticketing platform. Given this success, proposals have therefore been considered and options explored for the continued development of Tropical World. In addition, the capacity for growth in other areas has been examined, principally at the other attractions managed by the service including Lotherton Hall Bird Garden and Home Farm.
- 2.4 These three estates are part of the fabric of the city attracting approximately 10 million visits per annum from Leeds residents, as well as generating further visits from the across the city region. At present this broad statistical analysis of the total number of visits, results in circa 670,000 admissions to the fee paying attractions at Tropical World, Home Farm and Lotherton Hall.
- 2.5 The aspiration and vision is to build on the success at Tropical World and increase this number to circa 820,000 by 2020/21. It is considered that this can be achieved by improving the scope, standard and visitor experience at each attraction which will support in broadening the appeal and equally the enjoyment experienced by those visiting each attraction.
- 2.6 To achieve this objective the service has developed a phased and coordinated development plan commencing in 2016/17 through to 2020/21 that will improve transform and revitalise these attractions. The following section of this report provides further detail on the proposal for each site.

### **3 Main issues**

#### **3.1 Roundhay Park and Tropical World**

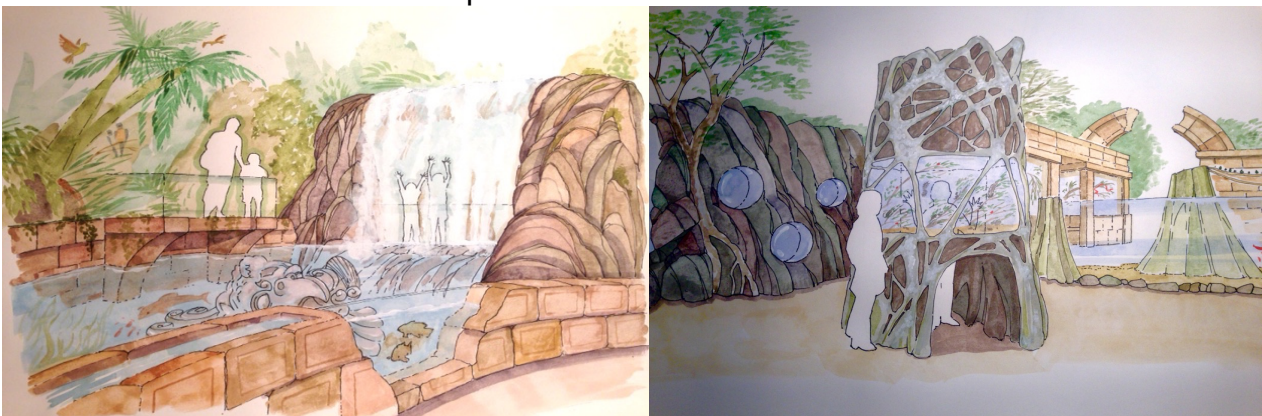
- 3.1.1 This report has outlined the significant improvements already undertaken at Tropical World; however, it is felt that capacity exists to broaden the appeal of the attraction still further and at the same time enhance the quality of the visitor experience by improving the visual and education content of the exhibits.
- 3.1.2 Work undertaken in the initial phase of development to improve the aquarium space provided a foundation from which development could flow throughout the attraction. Indeed the negative consequence of this positive improvement was that it highlighted the need for further investment in the visitor attraction itself, in terms of exhibit development and the requirement to refresh theming which had become tired and dated. Consequently, the service has engaged those partners who supported in the development and ongoing maintenance of the aquarium and

commissioned a plan for the site that seeks to improve all areas of the attraction. The proposals included within this plan have been costed and a phased delivery plan developed that gives due regard to deliverability, but principally the requirement to ensure business continuity and not unduly affect customers visitor experience whilst development work is taking place.

- 3.1.3 The principal aim of the next phase of development proposed at Tropical World is to present a coherent, coordinated and visually stunning series of redevelopments that can be rolled out to the different 'zones'. Animal welfare, husbandry standards and visual attractiveness are the cornerstones of each suggested progression. Each zone will have a different look, atmosphere and sound to take the visitor on a pathway of discovery, with a multitude of new attractions to find in each area including a number of new species that will enhance the visitor experience, strengthen conservation and research projects and improve educational opportunities. Phasing and zone improvements are summarised below:

#### **Phase 1- 2016/17**

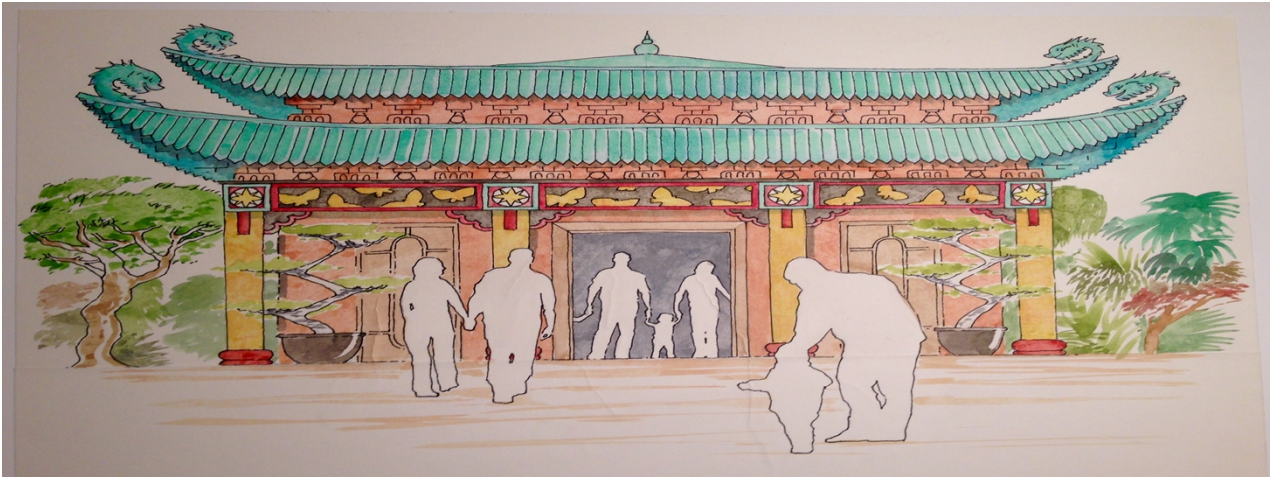
- Creature Corner-  
This will be transformed into an upper Aztec temple in a manner that complements the improvements already made to the aquarium below.
- Waterfall House-  
This area will see significant improvements to theming along with the introduction of new species and areas of interest.



#### **Phase 2- 2017/18**

- Butterfly House-  
This will be re-themed taking inspiration from the volcanic and human altered landscapes of South East Asia.





### **Phase 3- 2019/20**

- Rainforest House-  
This house will be developed to include high waterfalls giving the impression that visitors are exploring the rainforest tree canopy from the perspective of a covered roof gallery.
- Desert House-  
This is a popular area of the attraction already housing the meerkat enclosure. Improvements will be focussed on remodelling existing enclosures and introducing some new species that complement existing and add interest.
- Nocturnal Zone-  
This area will be transformed to represent an abandoned mine.



- 3.1.4 Appendix 1 of this report provides some visual representation of how each zone is intended to be developed and the variety of species proposed for inclusion. In each phase the intention will be to commence work with the minimum of disturbance in advance of October half term and complete in advance of the February half term, both of which are busy and popular time for families within Leeds to visit with the intervening period being consistently the quietest period for the attraction. Conversations with users of the attraction on site are occurring daily via numerous forms of media and this process will be expanded upon both before and during any on site construction to keep users informed of progress and any restrictions that may be in place during their visit.
- 3.1.5 With regards to both phases 1 and 2 it is considered feasible to undertake this work with only minimal disturbance and therefore the attraction can remain open during the redecorating process with restricted access to some areas for safety

reasons. Due to visitor flows along with the layout and interconnected nature of those areas proposed for development in Phase 3, this facet of the development would need to be considered as one distinct phase and would necessitate the closure of the attraction for a minimum of 4 months. It should be noted that all work proposed within Tropical World is in essence a redesign and re-theming of existing internal attraction and as such will have no material planning considerations.

#### Development of Go Ape in Roundhay Park

- 3.1.6 In addition to the continued development of Tropical World, the service has also explored options to improve the range of concessions on offer within the park with the objective of broadening even further the estates appeal to families and residents within Leeds and the City region. This process has been supplemented by a continued and proactive approach to utilising the venue for events which in 2016 include the On- Roundhay Festival, the Leeds Triathlon and scheduled for later in the year, the Northern Magical Lantern Festival.
- 3.1.7 Furthermore, Leeds City Council Parks and Countryside service have been approached by Go Ape in order to assess the viability of establishing a high ropes adventure course at one of the council's outdoor sites. Through consultation with Go Ape, Roundhay Park was identified by them as being the only commercially viable site for a course within Leeds.
- 3.1.8 High ropes adventure courses are very popular visitor attractions that offer those using the facility an exciting leisure experience, as is evident from the images below. In order to ascertain the views of park users on the principle of developing this type of facility within Roundhay Park, the Parks and Countryside service conducted a survey of 450 people which supported the principle of developing this concession on site with feedback inferring that park users considered the potential for positive outcomes relating to improved engagement by children and young people and the opportunity to be physically active. Of those surveyed 81% said they or another family member would attend a course if one was to be opened in the park.



- 3.1.9 Clearly there is a need to ensure that any development of this nature is both financially and environmentally sustainable and equally it will be necessary to



undertake a full planning application for any work with due regard given to issues such as public access, the development of a viable travel plan and maintaining the health of trees. Advice from colleagues within planning has been sought at the inception of the scheme and Go Ape was represented at those discussions.

### **3.2 Lotherton Bird Garden**

3.2.1 The Lotherton Estate is principally made up of Lotherton Bird Garden, the House, on site retail, a café, estate gardens and a play area. Entry to each aspect of the estate is via a single tickets point of entry. A recent Museums and Galleries commissioned survey into a number of visitor attractions provided some excellent visitor insight for Lotherton Estate with the salient observations highlighted below;

- 50% of visitors to the attraction are likely to have children with the majority aged between 0-11,
- 49% are likely to visit in parties of 4 or more,
- The average time spent on site by visitors is 3 hours,
- 70% of people visiting the site are likely to be repeat visitors,
- 68% of visitors to the estate are likely to visit the Bird Garden,
- The Bird Garden and estate grounds are the most enjoyed aspect of the attraction.

3.2.2 Giving due regard to the above it is considered that any improvements to the bird garden are likely to appeal directly to the attractions primary audience. Extensive consultation has been undertaken on the bird garden, specifically to gain a better understanding of what is liked, what could be improved, and how best to do so.

3.2.3 Whilst the above provides a clear affirmation of the popularity of the bird garden, it is acknowledged that improvement and investment in on site facilities and displays is very much needed. Informed by this insight and in acknowledgment of the need for improvement, the service has developed a comprehensive proposal for the renovation of the bird garden to transform the area into a modern, engaging and exciting visitor attraction that will facilitate the presentation of a more diverse collection of animals. The objective of this development will be to firstly modernise and enhance the attraction in order to sustain visitor numbers in the long term and equally grow the audience for the estate.

3.2.4 The bird garden and its subsequent development will be broken down to a series of phases, with the attraction itself being partitioned into a number of distinct areas. Further detail on the content of each of these area's is explored in the below series of bullet points which provide a synopsis of the improvements proposed in each area and the intended phasing of improvements on site:

#### **Phase 1- 2016/17**

- **Coastal Zone**

This will be a centrepiece feature for the park and will involve the creation of a completely new set of enclosures, encompassing penguins, flamingos, wading and free flying birds within an aviary structure. The new penguin pool will include above and below ground viewing areas.

- Forests

The naturally wooded and shady areas within the bird garden will be developed to provide a commonly themed and diverse species mix ranging from temperate to tropical forest habitats. In part situated adjacent to the coastal zones, new species for inclusion within the forest area will be developed including Tapir and Vasayan Watry Pigs.

- Retail and Information Point

Proposed for inclusion within the entrance point to the attraction and providing viewing to the coastal area and initial Forest zone. The intention is to develop a modest themed structure that will provide a retail option and information point on entering and egressing the site. Planning consent will be required for this aspect of the development.



## **Phase 2- 2017/18**

- Africa Zone

Centred on the existing large aviary structure within the bird garden, this area will display some of the most iconic theming within the redevelopment including newly created mongoose exhibit, a Masai hut on entrance and exit, the inclusion of nest box cameras and the development of a central display area where talks, displays and events can be performed which will involve the creation of a new seating area, contained and themed as if within a Masai village compound.

- Tropical

An existing area will be remodelled to provide an undercover space with new exhibits developed that will include tropical themed species of birds, insects and amphibians.

- Children's zone

The intention is to create a small children's zoo with some small farm type animals with associated hand wash facilities.

## **Phase 3- 2018/19**

- Asia

Involving significant re theming of existing exhibits development in this area will see the introduction of Red Panda along with the development of an Otter exhibit.

- South American

This area will display a wide range of species reflecting the incredible diversity to be found in this region. The existing condor aviary will be remodelled to

house a group of woolly monkeys which will utilise the arboreal space above the heads of the visitors. Several of the fence sections will be removed and replaced with glass panels to allow improved visitor viewing. One of the most popular displays in any small animal collection are the marmosets, tamarins and other small primates. An existing circular aviary structure in this area provides a fantastic opportunity to house small groups of these animals.

- 3.2.5 The plans for Lotherton Bird garden are transformational and consequentially the service is undertaking a review of how the attraction is branded and marketed moving forward. Consequently, the aspirations regarding the future of the site are equally ambitious with a targeted increase in admission of 40% which equates to an increase of 72,000 visits per annum from pre development figures spread proportionately over a 3 year period.
- 3.2.6 Appendix 2 of this report provides some visual representation of how each zone is intended to be developed and the variety of species proposed for inclusion. As highlighted with Tropical World, the intention would be to plan works on site to coincide with a period of low demand for admissions namely the period from November to April.
- 3.2.7 The nature of the work to be carried out on site is in effect a coordinated programme of improved landscape features and exhibit presentation. As such it is again proposed that the significant majority of work undertaken will be done by the councils Parks and Countryside service with specialist support enlisted relating to filtration and dressing. The benefit of this approach is that any work undertaken will be done by those with specific knowledge of the site both in terms of the process of development and post implementation management and maintenance capacity.

### **3.3 Home Farm Temple Newsam**

- 3.3.1 Temple Newsam Estate includes the estate grounds, café and Home Farm, with and a Jacobian House. The grounds of the estate attract in the region of 2 million annual visits. A popular and important element of the offer at Temple Newsam is Home Farm, which attracts in the region of 85,000 visits a year.
- 3.3.2 The Parks and Countryside service have undertaken an extensive review of its existing customer base for Home Farm as well as analysing and appraising its competitors. The conclusion has been the development of a comprehensive business plan and proposal to refresh and refocus the appeal of Home Farm via the development of a bespoke indoor play facility with integral café and retail space.
- 3.3.3 By diversifying service provision in this way, it is possible to modernise Home Farm and at the same time improve commercial performance and competitiveness. At present the farms unique selling point remains the fact that it is an accessible working farm in an urban environment that provides strong positive educational messages relating to rare breed farming. However it clearly also has a role as a recreational visitor facility and the capacity for growth in this area by improving facilities is significant. The move to develop an in indoor play

area will provide new customer focused facilities that are at present dated and in need of refocussing.

3.3.4 This development would see one of the existing farm buildings converted for this purpose and would allow for a transformation of the present entry and egress arrangements for customers entering the Farm. It is considered that a renovation of this type will support the following objectives;

- Establish the Temple Newsam Estate as a viable year round attraction and in doing so significantly increase the number of visits to the site.
- Develop a retail and catering offer within the paid for element of the farm that will be integral to the new development and in doing so create capacity to meet ever increasing demand in the courtyard cafe.
- Provide children with an improved experience following their visit to Home Farm, in particular for those 5 and above who currently make up only 10% of all annual entries into Home Farm.
- Provide scope and space for improved education regarding rare breed farming and conservation.
- Contribute towards the Best Council Plan outcome for everyone in Leeds to enjoy happy, healthy, active lives' with a particular focus on children and young people.

3.3.5 Appendix 3 of this report highlights the buildings proposed for development and the type and style of play equipment that is intended for inclusion is demonstrated in the below images. As is evident from the attached appendices, the intention is to renovate an existing building within the farm and convert this building for an alternative purpose. Plans for this element of the attraction development are at this point still at feasibility and inception stage of development , however the below images provide an idea of the type of development that the service is intending to pursue;





### 3.4 Marketing

- 3.4.1 At Tropical World there was a planned approach to marketing ahead of reopening in March 2015 and this was undoubtedly a factor in the success. In particular social media was used to good effect with Twitter account (@tropworldleeds) and Facebook page (TropicalworldLeeds) which was set up in 2013. In total, the number of Twitter impressions (the number of times Tweets gained exposure to Twitter accounts) between February and April 2015 was 163,824. Facebook reach (the number of times a story appeared in newsfeeds) was 310,456. A Tropical World mascot was also introduced - 'Mango the Meerkat' proving very popular and makes regular appearances. The attraction was closed to conduct the works from November and this was used as an opportunity to build up anticipation of the reopening in March and included a 'where's Mango' competition with a photograph of the mascot at other Council attractions – meaning they could be promoted as well. In addition in February this year a further marketing campaign was launched as illustrated below which proved a bid success.



- 3.4.2 A marketing plan has been developed for Tropical World to take full advantage of the refurbishment. Upcoming additions include a new website, online booking and ticket purchase plus promotion of children's parties and education visits.
- 3.4.3 A joint working approach between the Museums and Galleries service and Parks and Countryside to managing and marketing Lotherton Hall was established in 2011 with a view to promoting the site and increasing visitor numbers. Upcoming marketing campaigns include the scarecrow trail and the Christmas experience illustrated as follows.





- 3.4.4 The investment in the bird garden is an opportunity to rebrand the site to provide a variety of experiences and a marketing plan will be developed to take full advantage of this.
- 3.4.5 There is currently a joint marketing plan for Temple Newsam and examples of the Home Farm summer marketing campaign are shown below.



- 3.4.6 This autumn a joint management and marketing board will be established with colleagues in the Museums and Galleries service to mirror the successful joint working at Lotherton. The creation of an indoor play area within the farm will provide opportunities to widen the appeal of the attraction from a marketing perspective and any future campaign will reflect this.
- 3.4.7 The professional central marketing team have played a key role in developing the marketing approach for all of these sites and are now an integral part of the planning and management of each attraction.

## **4 Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 As is evident from this report the plan is for each attraction to be developed in phases, and the intention is therefore to have an ongoing conversation with site uses at each phase of development. This will be supplemented by a more broad conversation and consultation exercise at each site on the principle of development. Notwithstanding that, some specific consultation has been undertaken to inform proposals and details of that are provided below.
- 4.1.2 A consultation process has been undertaken on both the principle of developing an aerial adventure concession within Roundhay Park and also the proposed development scheduled for inclusion in phase one at Tropical World. The salient observations from that process are included in the below bullet points;
- 81% of visitors surveyed said they would use an aerial adventure course should one be developed at Roundhay.
  - 92% of people surveyed felt that the type and style of development that was implemented in the aquarium should be replicated in other parts of Tropical World.
  - 97% of people surveyed wanted future developments to provide a more immersive experience in which people could feel closer to the animals.
- 4.1.3 We know from work into customer insight that 68% of people visiting Lotherton Hall will use the Bird Garden. To assist in informing the design and feasibility process at Lotherton, consultation was undertaken with customers via an online platform as well as undertaking a focussed development day to engage with staff to ascertain their ideas.
- 4.1.1 The salient outcome from this consultation process are highlighted below;
- 64% felt it would be positive idea to include other appropriate animals in enclosures with some of the birds.
  - 72% expressed a desire to landscape the enclosures and buildings with natural materials and colours to reflect the native environment of the birds
  - 55% of people surveyed felt it was important to improve hand wash and toilet facilities.
- 4.1.2 As part of this process respective ward members have been briefed on the proposals for development at each site. It is acknowledged that these attractions

sit within community greenspaces and developments may have a local impact and therefore as work progresses further updates will be provided.

## **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 4.2.1 Due consideration has been given to the needs of minority groups, as required under equality legislation, in the formation of the designs undertaken to this point. Consideration will be given to ensuring that due regard is given to accessibility throughout the design process.
- 4.2.2 Given that Tropical World, Home Farm and Lotherton Bird Garden are busy popular attractions the changes and improvements proposed at these sites should result in a positive impact on a significant number of people which will inevitably include a range of different users and equality characteristics.
- 4.2.3 Potential negative impacts, are for the most part associated with possible barriers to access that may occur following any increase in the price of entry to each attraction with the potential this may have to reduce the affordability for low income families and individuals. The process of implementing any price increase will be the subject of a separate and subsequent decision and will therefore be screened accordingly at that time.
- 4.2.4 A screening document has been prepared for the approvals requested in this report. Further screens, and where necessary any full impact assessments will be undertaken at as part of the approval process for each individual stage of development. The EDCI screening document is included in appendix 4 of this report.

## **4.3 Council policies and best council plan**

- 4.3.1 This project complies with various Council policies and strategies relevant to improving the city and overall level of service provision. The main documents are referred to below;
- 4.3.2 The Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030 sets out a revised vision for the city with the specific objective for Leeds to be the best city in the UK by 2030. In establishing this vision one of the top priorities to emerge from consultation was for the city to be a cleaner greener city. Aspects of this priority can be found in all of the areas in which the vision is intended to make a difference, although specific reference can be made to the commitment within the vision for Leeds to be the best city to live with good green spaces where everyone can enjoy a good quality of life. Developing this capital project will unquestionably enhance 3 of the city's major park attractions to the benefit of all residents and those immediate communities who utilise these spaces as a community green space.
- 4.3.3 The proposals contained in this report contribute to the Best Council Plan ambition of becoming a more efficient and enterprising council. These improvements also support the Best Council Plan 2016/17 priorities of 'Enhancing the quality of our public realm and green spaces' with increased visitor numbers

‘Supporting economic growth’; an improved learning offer also contributes to the priority around ‘Improving educational achievement’.

- 4.3.4 The ambitious plans for these attractions will lead to an improved visitor experience but also increased visitor numbers and therefore improved sustainability at each estate.

#### 4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 In total, it is anticipated that £3.1m would be required to provide transformational change at each of the three attractions. The below table provides a summary of phasing of works at each site along with the indicative costs of refurbishment and development;

Parks & Countryside Attractions						
	Total	Forecast				
		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 on
Expenditure Required on the scheme	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Tropical World	650.0	200.0	130.0	-	320.0	-
Lotherton Hall	1,205.0	500.0	320.0	385.0	-	-
Home Farm ( Temple Newsam)	1,300.0	-	1,300.0	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,155.0</b>	<b>700.0</b>	<b>1,750.0</b>	<b>385.0</b>	<b>320.0</b>	<b>-</b>

- 4.4.2 A business plan has been drafted which supports the principle of financing these developments predominately through the use of unsupported prudential borrowing. Based on the principle of applying an invest to grow methodology, it is considered that the potential exists to generate additional revenue to the value of £1m per annum by 2020/21 with investment in each attraction acting as a catalyst for growth. The below table provides a summary of the level of net saving anticipated set against expenditure including financing costs;

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000's
<b>Additional Expenditure, including costs of borrowing</b>	<b>50.2</b>	<b>206.4</b>	<b>249.7</b>	<b>263.2</b>	<b>263.2</b>
<b>Total Additional Income</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>439.2</b>	<b>727.9</b>	<b>747.4</b>	<b>1028.5</b>
<b>Net saving</b>	<b>-50.2</b>	<b>232.8</b>	<b>478.2</b>	<b>484.2</b>	<b>765.3</b>

- 4.4.3 In essence it is anticipated that a capital investment of £3.1 million will deliver a net saving of £765k per annum by 2020/21. The business case is predicated on increased income being achieved at each attraction. At present admissions numbers are 670,000 at Tropical World, Home Farm and Lotherton Hall and the aspiration and vision is to build on the success at Tropical World and increase this number to circa 820,000 by 2020/21.
- 4.4.4 At each attraction and in each phase the quality and scale improvements proposed within a given financial year will be both significant and considerable. Therefore following the completion of each stage of development, an appraisal of the cost of entry will be undertaken with a view implementing a proportionate increase in price. Any decision to increase price will be subject to a separate delegated decision by the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside prior to

implementation and in each case due regard will be given to ensuring existing concessionary discounts remain in place and that barriers to entry are not established.

- 4.4.5 It is acknowledged that an invest to save approach does include an element of risk and therefore sensitivity analysis has been undertaken on the impact of a 5% and 10% reduction on the projected attendance numbers. Should these circumstances materialise, it remains financial viable to proceed with improvements at each site. Budgeted revenue savings have been made in light of the projected outcomes in the business plan, should admission numbers be 10% lower than projected the committed budget saving remain achievable. Conversely should the net savings projected in 4.4.2 be realised the Parks and Countryside service will be able to make a further contributions towards the councils budget. There is even less risk that the maximum additional borrowing costs of £243k per annum will not be met. Notwithstanding the financial impact it should be borne in mind that one clear tangible outcome of investment will be a vastly improved visitor attraction.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, access to information and call In**

- 4.5.1 The decisions requested in this report are eligible for call-in, in line with the Council's Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules.
- 4.5.2 Each phase of the development at each site will be the subject to a separate decision regarding the injection of capital and authority to spend once we are clear on the detail and cost.
- 4.5.3 It is intended that Parks and Countryside will lead on the development process at both Tropical World and Lotherton Hall and in terms of procurement will do so as the appropriate internal service provider. Due regard will be given to contract procedure rules in the process of procuring or enlisting any specialist support.
- 4.5.4 Following the advice from both Legal and the Council's PPU service, a high ropes adventure course is best progressed under a concession licence and lease arrangement as opposed to a tender process, as the Council is not buying into or providing this service.

#### **4.6 Risk management**

- 4.6.1 The first phases of development at both Tropical World and Lotherton Hall have been designed in detail and fully cost appraised. Future phases of development require the completion of detailed design proposals and confirmation of cost identified at the feasibility stage of the design process. Due regard will be given to ensuring that future phases of work are value engineered and delivered within the approved funding envelope.
- 4.6.2 Given in house expertise at both sites and the experience gained in successfully developing Tropical World, work proposed as part of this redevelopment to re-theme and decorate new and exists exhibits at both Tropical World and Lotherton Hall will be undertaken by the Parks and Countryside service with the support of specialist contractors who have existing knowledge of the site and its specific



systems. There is a risk of coordination issues arising between the ISP and the selected specialists this will be mitigated through a joint partnership approach to undertaking work on site.

- 4.6.3 It is acknowledged that other companies exist that provide high ropes aerial adventure course, however only Go Ape have approached the council and in doing so have been proactive in undertaking a feasibility assessment on the capacity for developing this kind of facility in Leeds. High ropes adventure courses are a bespoke attraction and include an element of managed risk. Go Ape are the leading company in this sector and have established a good reputation in this industry. As highlighted in the legal section of this report, the intention is to move forward on the basis of a concession and license approach. Any agreement to enter into a concession with Go Ape at Roundhay Park would be predicated on a planning application being approved by Leeds City Council.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 This report has outlined the positive outcomes that have been realised following the redevelopment of Tropical World, which include growth in admissions, enhanced income generation and improved visitor feedback. Undertaking the initial redevelopment process has demonstrated the positive impact that can be achieved from investing in the city's park attractions and how this can be translated into improved financial performance when investment is supported by the application of an enterprising approach to management.
- 5.2 Proposals have therefore been considered and options explored for the continued development of Tropical World and the potential to develop other concessions at Roundhay Park, as well as an examination of the capacity for growth at the other attractions managed by the service within the city's primary estates at Lotherton Hall Bird Garden and Temple Newsam Home Farm.
- 5.3 Plans have been produced that are designed to deliver transformational change at these three attractions that are both imaginative and enterprising. A business plan has been developed that supports the principle of prudentially borrowing £3.1m in capital funding to implement these ambitious plans which once delivered will see long overdue improvements to each attraction. The potential exists for this investment of capital to act as a catalyst for a growth in admissions to close to 820'000 per year which could then in turn support the delivery of a projected net saving of £765k per annum to support the sustainability of existing services.
- 5.4 This is about the council being imaginative and enterprising to save money and bring in income for the future to sustain services

## **6 Recommendations**

6. Executive Board are requested to approve the following recommendations:

- 6.1. the principle of incurring expenditure to an estimated value of £3.1m to deliver the improvements to attractions that are outlined in this report and that each phase of

development at each site is subject to separate approvals once detailed design and cost estimates are in place.

To request the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside to:

- 6.2. To implement proposals outlined in this report that will continue the themed development of the visitor attraction elements of the Arnold and Marjorie Ziff Tropical World.
- 6.3. To enter into an agreement with Go Ape regarding the establishment of an aerial adventure concession within Roundhay Park and to support the development of a detailed design from which planning consent is to be sought.
- 6.4. To develop plans and gain any necessary consent that may be required to implement the proposals outlined in this report relating to the development of Lotherton Hall Bird garden.
- 6.5. To develop plans and gain any necessary consent that may be required to implement the proposals outlined in this report relating to the development of Home Farm Temple Newsam.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.